

**CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**SUGGESTED PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES**

The Chesterfield County Planning Commission is established under the authority of the Code of Virginia to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors of Chesterfield County and to assist the Board of Supervisors in the administration of the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, Comprehensive Plan, other matters affecting the development and growth of the County, and to promote programs, policies and plans to achieve a distribution of population and land development within the County to facilitate effective and adequate provision of public services and facilities. The following are adopted policies of the Chesterfield County Planning Commission:

- 1) Citizens should have the opportunity for meaningful input in the planning and zoning process;
- 2) The Planning Department and other co-reviewing departments shall assist applicants for the purpose of presenting applications in appropriate form and maximizing the clarity of presentation;
- 3) The planning and zoning process shall provide an orderly method for the presentation of proposed changes in zoning and it shall be applied uniformly among applicants.

In furtherance of these policies, the Chesterfield County Planning Commission has adopted the following suggested practices and procedures.

***Preapplication conferences.***

At least two (2) weeks prior to filing an application to amend, supplement or change the district boundaries or regulations of the Zoning Ordinance, every applicant shall meet with the Planning Department and other co-reviewing departments to discuss the request and receive input concerning the filing of the request. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit requests in an accurate and final form to avoid deferrals or adverse staff recommendations. It is highly recommended that applicants resolve issues relating to the quality of the application with County staff prior to submission of the formal request.

***Coordination with Planning Commissioner.***

Applicants for rezonings, conditional uses, site plans, schematic plans, tentative subdivisions or other matters scheduled for the Planning Commission's consideration shall

coordinate with the Planning Commissioner in whose district the affected property is located. The extent of coordination will differ depending on the nature of the application. The Planning Commissioner and the applicant shall determine the extent to which meetings are required.

### ***Notification of Affected Property Owners and Civic Associations.***

Applicants shall write to all adjacent property owners and offer to meet with them at least thirty days prior to the initial public hearing. Applicants shall also check the active civic association list on file with the Planning Department and contact those that may be affected by the application, offering to meet with them at least thirty days prior to the public hearing. If meetings with area property owners and civic associations are to be held, the applicants shall coordinate the scheduling of the meeting with the appropriate Commissioner and County staff. If an applicant has not previously given the Planning Department evidence that notice has been sent, the applicant shall state at the public hearing whether this notice has been given. In the event the notice has not been given, it shall be the policy of the Planning Commission to consider whether the case should be deferred.

### ***Deferrals.***

As noted above, public input is extremely important to the planning and zoning process. Requests for deferral can have different impacts depending upon the specific circumstances surrounding the request. For example, deferrals can have the impact of providing the public time to adequately assess the impact of the proposed case. Similarly, deferrals can also be useful to provide time for differences between the applicant and the surrounding neighborhoods to be addressed. The Commission recognizes that appearance by the public at a series of meetings on the same case prior to the public hearing can have the negative impact of reducing the amount of public input in the process.

No applicant has a right to an automatic deferral. In order to minimize the inconvenience of deferrals to the public, the Planning Department and the Commission, an applicant requesting a deferral shall do so at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the scheduled hearing. All requests for deferral shall be in writing to the Planning Department. In addition, it shall be the applicant's responsibility to notify adjacent property owners in writing of the deferral request at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the scheduled hearing, but such notice should explain that the Commission may or may not grant the deferral and may choose to dispose of the case. If the applicant has not previously given the Planning Department evidence that adjacent property owners have been notified, the applicant shall state at the public hearing whether this notice has been given. In the event the notice has not been given, the Commission may elect to hold the public hearing and receive

neighborhood comments prior to considering a request for deferral. The applicant or a representative shall be present at the scheduled public hearing from which the deferral is being requested.

### ***Amendments to Case.***

A full understanding of the case is imperative to good decision making. Amendments to applications made too close to the scheduled public hearing can adversely impact the ability of the staff, public and Commission to fully assess the impact of the proposed zoning change.

The policy of the Commission shall be that no zoning case shall be considered by the Commission if amendments are made less than thirty days prior to the scheduled public hearing unless it is the consensus of the Commission that representatives from the affected neighborhood(s), staff and the Commissioners have had sufficient time to evaluate the amendments. In the event it is determined that there has not been sufficient time to evaluate the amendments, it shall be the policy of the Commission to consider whether the case should be deferred.

### ***Guidelines for Length of Time for Individuals to Speak.***

Presentations by the applicant are limited to 15 minutes. Presentations by representatives of groups are limited to 3 minutes. The applicant's rebuttal time is limited to 5 minutes. Staff shall be permitted an opportunity to respond to the presentations in accordance with Article V(F)(f) of the Chesterfield County Planning Commission By-Laws. The time used to respond to questions from the Commission will be excluded from the presentation time limits. Specified time limits may vary at the discretion of the Commission Chairman.

Neighborhoods should select a spokesperson to present their comments. The spokesperson should ask all persons supporting his or her comments to stand to show their support in lieu of presenting repetitive comments.

Successive speakers for either the proponents or the opponents should address different issues and should not be repetitive.

### ***Code of Conduct.***

#### **Commission Members**

Commission members shall confine their decisions to the matters presented on the agenda.

#### **Persons Appearing Before the Commission**

Persons appearing before the Commission will not be allowed to:

- (a) campaign for public office;
- (b) promote private business ventures;
- (c) engage in personal attacks;
- (d) use profanity or vulgar language;
- (e) address pending litigation; or
- (f) address matters not on the Commission's agenda